

# **Performance Scripts: Prime Numbers**

Edmond Chibeu



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Edmond Chibeu

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Experimental Intermedia Foundation, The Knitting Factory, NoSeNo, Ear Inn, The Rivington Street School, The Mudd Club, The Poetry Project at St. Marks in the Bowery, Midnight Muse, Bruno Walter Hall at Lincoln Center, The Alternative Museum, Children's Museum of Manhattan, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Limelight, Area, St. Clement's 46th St. NYC, RealArtWays, Windsor Art Center, Hygienic Gallery

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Performance Scripts: Prime Numbers by Edmond Chibeu

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For Chloë and Amy



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# Acedia

(a drama for three voices and a lamb)

when i come to dis country i am very poor and hard  
to speak her language now i been here long time and  
find out there is none but just lots of words not even  
like any special way to put it together  
just say what you think

ELOHIM

OM

WHEN SOME OR A ONE FOR GROUP DISSOLVE OR BECOME  
TENUOUS LEAVING AS THOUGH ENDING THE ASSOCIATION  
WOULD  
RETURN INTEGRITY TO THE INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS MONADIC  
INTEGRITY AS IN LONELINESS

SOMETHING LESS NO WAY A GOING OUT LIKE BREATH  
LIKE BREATH OVER A HANDLE  
SPIRITUAL LASSITUDE A PAIR SWEET SUZIE ACEDIA  
ONE

when i come to dis country i am very poor and hard  
to speak her language now i been here long time and  
find out there is none but just lots of words not even  
like any special way to put it together  
just say what you think

II  
C C  
T T  
H H  
U U  
S S

when i come to dis country i am very poor and hard  
to speak her language now i been here long time and  
find out there is none but just lots of words not even  
like any special way to put it together  
just say what you think

EAGLE

LION

## Chiliad disuse

CHARTREUSE

abattoir

therianthropic

chiliad

ecdysiast

VIOLET

glabellum

endocephalic

disuse

kermis

kresis

glabellum

chiliad

endothermic

pragmatic

glabellum

disuse

therianthropic

paraclete

paradigm

oxymoronic

abattoir

acedia

abjuration

abecedarian

glabellum

CHARTREUSE

no word worth remembering  
yet the moments taken together  
arrange themselves in a  
syntax made whole

not by our rambling permutations

but by the meaning they make clear

and are given to guard

*(Characters are CHARTREUSE and VIOLET.)*

## Concrete notebook

Notebook as always  
Fangs of the muse  
And then

S     d  
H     i  
E     c  
      t  
      a  
      t  
      e  
      s

mother of pearl  
underworld

VOICE

the abode of the image

I try to talk plain  
so you can hear me  
understand what I say

as if you could see  
right through me

a clear vessel  
a glass of water

as though it could just be said

like I wasn't there

Phhht...

the truth

## Jaap Reitman

uz af rit

uz af rit

uz af rit roon    jaap reeder

jaap reeder

uz af rit            jaap reeder    tweet loon

uz af rit            tweet loon

uz af rit roon    jaap reeder    tweet loon

jaap reeder

uz af rit            jaap reeder    tweet loon

uz af rit            tweet loon

uz af rit roon    jaap reeder    tweet loon

jaap reeder

uz af rit            jaap reeder

uz af roo

uz af roon                reet

## **Muttering script**

“I’m just doing this.”

“I’m here now.”

“Theoretically broken-hearted.”

“Food for think.”

“The sleep that doesn't come.”

*(Performers will stand around and mutter words and sounds to themselves from time to time. If another performer or any other person, muse, or spirit speaks to them, they may answer loudly with only one or more of the above phrases.)*

## **Unchanging performance**

(work in progress)

*(Please come back later.)*

## Whispered lips

He was a sophisticated lover  
But it didn't seem sophisticated  
at the time  
More like...

Elemental  
Essential  
Crawling in the mud  
A flash of lightning  
In an amino acid swamp

He had an educated out of town voice  
But it didn't seem  
sophisticated when he spoke...

Folkloric  
Unkind  
Raw or fundamental  
Inarticulate

She felt things when he spoke...

It all seemed very refined  
Slight trembling of the hands  
Cold in the pit of the stomach

He knew how to get things done  
How to convince her to do things  
He had language skills...

Whispered lips  
Close to her ear  
Abode of joy  
Poverty of spirit  
Loss of self

The goddess who teaches us to faint

*(Words flush left are spoken by The Voice.  
Indented material is spoken in turn by individuals or a chorus of Other Voices.)*

## Lilac garden

### SUNFLOWER

Stage directions:

Lilac is a British Buddhist ballet choreographer who loves Shakespeare.

The event takes place out of doors in a garden.

There is a sense of unfulfilled longing.

The event takes place in a dance studio.

The scent of lilac is in the air.

We move with deliberation.

The event takes place in an art gallery, museum, or performance space.

"She goes off on the arm of her betrothed with hopelessness in her eyes."

### ROSE

Parentheticals:

(without affect)

(quietly)

(lonelily)

(cleanlily)

(subliminally)

(broken heartedly)

(chantilly)

(sub rosa)

### CAMELLIA

Dialogue:

Put the mountains in a cage.

Bring them to the zoo.

Feed them twice a day.

After one thousand years set them free.

I cannot suppress my desire.

This nut will not crack.

Take one more step.

Here we are again.



*(Performers: Lilac, Sunflower, Rose, Camellia  
Lilac moves, dances; she does not speak.  
Sunflower says, "Stage directions" and then speaks  
the first line of stage directions.  
Rose says, "Parenthetical" then speaks  
the first line of parentheticals.  
Camellia says, "Dialogue" and then speaks  
the first line of dialogue.*

*The performers take turns with Sunflower reading first,  
Rose second, and Camellia third.*

*Each performer reads one line. After the performer  
reads, she must wait until the other two have had their  
turn before she speaks again.)*

## Gambit

### Voice 1

#### Garry

I think it's time we had a serious discussion about our relationship.

Now, I don't want you to get defensive.

It's important that we talk things out.

Two civilized people should be able to have a conversation about their life together without it becoming a contest.

A test of will.

One-ups-manship does not enter into this.

We're supposed to help one another and we've argued ourselves into an adversary relationship

There's got to be a way out of this.

*(Garry is the voice of desperation.*

*Deep Blue is the voice of decisions made.)*

### Voice 2

#### Deep Blue

Pawn to King-4

Knight to King's  
Bishop-3

King's Bishop to  
Queen's Knight-5

Pawn to Queen-3

King's Knight  
takes opposing  
King's Pawn

King's Knight to  
Queen's Bishop-4

King's Knight to  
Queen-6, check

Checkmate

## Faithliness expanded

(a desert dialogue)

(a serial script)

Is the drop of water	very vague
the water of the drop?	s p a c e y
Belief is conscious faith	hardly there at all
Metaphor the life of faith:	almost nothing
Faith weakens when	a gone thing
it becomes thought.	gone
Belief is the ultimate	
interpretation	
of reality.	

In order to see you must	teleological suicide
look.	spiritual lassitude
In order to hear you must	acedia
listen.	
In order to know you must	
believe.	
do you have doubt	we believe the unbelief
	gone, no belief
	unworthy of faith
faith does not exclude	pulled in two directions
doubt	
dialogue is all you need for	
faith	

*(The actors who take place in the dialogue:  
shall abstain from eating meat for three days before  
performance  
shall abstain from sex for three days before  
performance  
shall bathe within three hours before performance.)*

*In any serial script, the performers start anywhere but  
must go forward to the end before beginning in a new  
place.)*

## Aphasias of the moon

And	not
by	what
to	all
in	we
is	where
it	can
she	said
was	there
for	his
use	of
her	will
one	may
by	sheer
luck	or
almost	unbearable
compassion	embrace
these	words
or	the
one	who
made	them

*(A script for any number of voices. Spoken from the hurt.)*

## Book tour

She's got a lot of ideas

I've got a lot of ideas

She's going to write a  
book

She's going to call it

"Make-up secrets of the  
Rolla-Derby girls"

It's rated unexpurgated

An autobiography of  
somebody else

Now all she needs is a  
pseudonym

a cash advance

And a ghostwriter

My agent says it's a sure  
thing

She wants to know

Can you own intellectual  
property if you're not an  
intellectual  
And where do you go to  
get authorized  
And what's the best place  
to begin

## Four stroke

### Series I

I spend most of my life  
dreaming  
or  
drawing obscure symbols  
with my finger  
in the sand  
at the beach  
or in the desert  
wandering

### Series II

a candle  
light it  
and it burns  
knead it  
and it turns  
in your hand  
like the seasons  
burning down  
from the north  
on the wick of the sun

### Series III

and the sky never cleared  
as the night drew near  
and the stars  
and the stars  
and the stars  
who can see them  
through the haze  
trembling light  
like thunder  
through the night

### Series IV

all things  
every thing  
each thing  
the thing  
thing  
thing  
like a gong  
thing

*(This is a serial play. Each series of phrases must be spoken in order. Once a series is begun, a new series cannot be started until the actor has come to the final word of the series he is speaking.)*

*With four actors, each beginning with a different series and moving on to the next series when the first is finished, patterns of counterpoint, dissonance, and harmony will emerge. The actors need not read with the same emotion or at the same rate of speed. If they wish, they may repeat a series rather than moving on to the next; once a series has begun, it must be completed.)*

## Extrusive core

extrusive core

the ampersand  
of the at that

not her high of choice

pre-angulated cuneiform crystal

bit

crystal bit    so you really think you're going to make it  
hard bit       you're going to make it  
                  you're going to make it through the nose

personality does not enter into this

personality does not enter into her

it does not enter  
it does not

let this

let this slip

*(One male, two females, or any reasonable  
approximation thereof  
Read the text  
then say what you think)*

## Natural selection

(a script with lines and dots to guide the performers)

(all at a breath)

. . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . . (direct)  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . . (each) . . . . .  
 . . . . .

(gut of breath) .

(number)

(moot)

(skims)

(irreproachable)

—



(skims	s		s	sk	ms		skims)
	k		m	im	ki	s	s
	i	i		ss		k	m
	m	k				i	i
	s	s				m	k
	.					s	s
	.					.	
	.					.	
. . . . .	.					.	

. - - - - - (all foreign sounds)

.	-	.
(tripe	-	.
	-	.
soup - - - - -	-(up)	.....
	.	.

scrambles) - . . . .

*(The performers are: --- and ... they behave accordingly)*

## Weeks of the day

Steamed dumpling macaroni

Everybody's a winner  
in the great game of life

But the one who finally  
gets the goods

is the pinball wizard  
with a tilt and a bump

who has enough quarters  
to get into the game

Everything counts  
everything goes  
on your permanent record

Make no mistake  
about it

Monday  
another immediate nothing  
as so many of them are

But this one  
somehow different in its  
sameness

Words built Tuesday but

dyslexic Wednesday  
leaves me reading  
palindromes backward

Problem dog Thursday  
dresses in black

gallery hopping for free dinner  
of wine and cheese

Sign vehicle Friday  
points to no object  
Seeing just Saturday  
clubset thrills

sacerdotal Sunday  
stirs espresso  
puts down the spoon and  
sighs

## Metropolitan statistical district

0101 1001 1021 1000  
0110 1021 1011 1110  
2101 3121 1211 1231  
3333 4011 3030 3121

(silence)      ----      ----      ----

1210 0112 4323 1030  
444 4040 0444 4440

*(improvise at liberty numbers in groups of four)*

#### #### #### ####  
#### #### #### ####  
#### #### #### ####  
#### #### #### ####

(silence)      ----      ----      ----

*(As a paralogue both performers begin at the same time.*

*One performer should begin in a free improvisation of silence at the last line of performance, and move up the page speaking the numbers from right to left, and ending with the first number in the upper left hand corner.*

*The other performer should say the names of the numbers from left to right, from top to bottom.*

*The performer going down the page from left to right ends the piece in a free improvisation of numbers followed by silence. The silence is the final movement of the piece.)*

## **Conceptual dilemma**

*(Please realize that now you're at the point where it's either something or nothing.  
You must decide.)*

## Neutral truth

(a performance script)

parabolic passion

minus b

plus or minus

the square root

of the broken

heart squared

minus four times

the thing that

matters most

over

the sense of loss

that we never

get over

function of feeling

my eyes on your neck

listening to

your tongue in my ear

the arc of the story

going forward

quadratically

words words words

words words words words

words words words

words words words words

lines lines lines lines

lines lines lines

lines lines lines lines

lines lines lines

her story her story

the story the story

our story story

his story story

going forward

with the story

quadratically

*(The script should be performed simultaneously on the moon and on the earth.*

*As well as being performed, the script should be laminated and put on display, placed in the bottom of a shallow container filled with water.*

*On earth the water in the container should be tinted green.*

*On moon the water in the container should be tinted blue.)*

## 12 bar performance

of a beginning  
of a catmountain  
of a wall  
of a life  
of a wolf  
of a love  
of a glance  
of a sadness  
of a caged  
of a crept animal  
of a mountain  
of a woman

it was a kind  
it was a time  
it was a softness  
it was a beginning  
it was a glance  
it was a sadness  
it was a meaning  
it was a love  
it was a future  
it was a freightcar  
it was a dance  
it was a dream

when I arrived  
when you  
when  
when she began  
when it finished  
when one traveled  
when we saw  
when you cried  
when they were

when several remembered  
when another

when the moon comes  
over the mountain

The third performer:

believes in truth  
carries a flag  
tries to signal

The second performer:

is filled with awe  
waves arms hither and yon  
is in love

The first performer:

believes in freedom  
paces the floor  
is manic-depressive

*The performers shall bathe within a period of three hours  
before the performance and not eat meat the day of the  
performance)*

# The Rivington Street School

(two voices)

When the phone ring

No Se No

say que te parece

say, que te contesta

No Se No

Say what you think

Say what you prefer

Se rompen las copas

de la madrugada

When the phone ring

No Se No

say what you think we should do next

Tell me what it is that you wanted me to say

I said

Say please

leave a message when you hear me beep

It would also be helpful if you leave

the day and time of your call

I'll blip you back on the system

as soon as I receive a sign

When the phone ring

Empiesa el llanto del telephono

se rompen el silencio del barrio

When the phone ring

over the face of the water

No Se No

Street rainbow

Water Ray

Say the code straight

Speak the truth

"Watch your step

3 men died on this spot"

I'm trying to say what I know

Say what I know

The truth

## When the words are talking

Blue Voice	Green Voice
<p>It is hard to read when the words on the page are talking to you Sometimes I get hung up... go around again. Read a word over and over again And and over Over again and over again</p>	
	<p>And and over Over again and over again</p>
<p>Move on to the end of the word, the line, the sentence Try to get past it and loop back And over again</p>	<p>Move on to the end of the word, the line, the sentence Try to get past it and loop back</p>
<p>Find myself Listening Again to the word speaking to me The words banging around in my Almost empty head Bumping into my thoughts In the domed auditorium</p>	<p>Find myself listening</p>
	<p>The more I focus the more I repeat</p>
<p>The more I focus the more I repeat</p>	<p>repeat</p>



Blue Voice	Green Voice
<p>The words are speaking to me  Each word like a radio station  Broadcasting on the incessant chatter frequency  Why can't they be silent and let me think  Tell the words to shut up and let me read  I don't want the words to read to me  I want to read them  Inhaling is the only way to get control and that  only works half the time</p>	<p>Why can't they be silent and let me think</p> <p>Tell the words to shut up and let me read  I don't want the words to read to me  I want to read them</p>
<p>Inhaling is the only way to get control and that</p>	
	<p>only works half the time</p>

*(When words for both voices are contained in the same row, both voices should read their words in that row at approximately the same time. The alignment of words within the row is a suggestion of where the Green Voice should start. A voice should not begin the next row until the other voice has finished.)*

## Conceptual Shakespeare

It's like Shakespeare without the words

"And thrice again, to make up nine."

*(Please produce*

*Macbeth by William Shakespeare cut everything but the pageants, dances, combats, knives, castles, banquets, heaths, forests, ghosts and witches. All dialogue should be improvised by the performers.)*

## Lilt song

kinematic viscosity  
pressure

*Free improvisation of  
words and phrases and  
sounds, many of which  
may be in different  
languages*

power, energy  
force  
dynamic viscosity

vector, angle,  
speed, acceleration

torque

frequency, density

sine  
cosine  
tangent

area,  
volume

pressure  
decibel  
logarithm

The rule of law

surface poetry  
word impasto

white writing  
abstract  
expressionist

ontological surface  
open message

dereferentialist  
text tour

laws of old physics

*Free improvisation of  
silence  
Tilt your body this way  
and that*

voice  
white language  
voluntary writing

the trap of style

## Flower sermon

*(the buddha lifts a flower)*

*(the disciple stops dreaming)*

stop letting go  
stop stopping

the dreadful murder of the buddha

The performers shall abstain from sex except with one another for three days before the performance	The performers shall not eat meat for three days before the performance.  The performers shall not drink alcohol for two days before the day of performance but may drink alcohol before, during, or after performing on the day of performance
---	---

## Beloved prepositions

through at over  
near with  
on top of  
all up in  
from by for

the shape  
of thought  
recorded  
on the air

at the center of the  
inferno  
thinking he is  
climbing up  
discovers himself  
climbing down

A life among the underground  
So cold  
Black ink  
If had been  
Might be as were

## Stage mirror

(mirror stage)

I mean how would you	you would how mean I
say it	say it
if it were different	if it were different
you know	you know
the mind's voice	the mind's voice
spontaneously	spontaneously
leads you	leads you
to write things down	to write things down
like that	like that
say what you see	say what you see
no filter but the page	no filter but the page
like a mirror that sings	like a mirror that sings

## About the Author

Edmond Chibeu has been associated with the Rivington Street School, and the Fluxus movement through his work with Alison Knowles and John Cage. Chibeu's work has been performed at RealArtWays, Bruno Walter Hall at Lincoln Center, The Alternative Museum, Experimental Intermedia Foundation, The Knitting Factory, NoSeNo, the Ear Inn, and the Windsor Art Center.

Chibeu has worked with Kenneth Rexroth, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gary Snyder, Allen Ginsberg, and Charles Bernstein among others. He served his teenage apprenticeship in the Off Off Broadway movement at LaMama, Cafe Cino, and Joe Papp's Shakespeare in the Park at Delacorte Theatre.

Edmond Chibeu received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University, his Master's degree from the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, and his BA from Long Island University. He currently teaches scriptwriting at ECSU.

## **About the Publisher**

Red Dust, Inc. was founded by Joanna Gunderson in New York in 1961. The press has published more than one hundred titles, including works by Robert Pinget, Emmanuel Hocquard, Gunter Kunter, and Francis Ponge. Joanna Gunderson, publisher and writer, received the diploma of Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French government in 2002. Her purpose was and is to publish texts thought unpublishable because of length, form, or content. A major interest is non-linear work.



\$9.00

Edmond Chibeau has always been fascinated by language.

He played hooky from school to visit the United Nations Security Council and listen to the multi-language translations of speeches.

- Joanna Gunderson

I am interested in creating what nature creates not describing what nature has created.

I am fascinated by the idea that someone might perform the writing rather than read it quietly in their head. The script enlists the reader not merely to appreciate but to enact what is written.

The scripts are more about intent than result, process rather than product.

- Edmond Chibeau



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